

Edgy Stylistic Fronting

The present paper presents empirical evidence for a new functional category, Top+P, which I take to be part of the Complementizer Phrase split array, and which hosts S(tylistically) Fronted elements. Stylistic Fronting is a leftward movement of an XP or a head into a position that precedes the finite verb when Spec-IP is not occupied by an overt subject DP. The stylistic operation is attested in Insular Scandinavian languages such as Icelandic and Faroese (Maling 1980/1990, Barnes 1987, Platzack 1988, Jónsson 1991, 1996, Falk 1993, Holmberg 2000, among others), and in Old Danish (Vikner 1990), Old Swedish (Platzack 1987, 1988), Middle English (Roberts 1993, Kroch & Taylor 1997), and Yiddish (Diesing 1990, Santorini 1989, 1994). Within the Romance group, Stylistic Fronting was possible in Old Spanish (Fontana 1993) and Old Catalan (Fischer & Alexiadou 2001, Fischer 2000, 2004). Of particular interest to us is the suggestion made by Dupuis (1989), Cardinaletti & Roberts (1991/2002) and Roberts (1993, Chapters 1 & 2) that Old French probably had Stylistic Fronting too.

The aim of this paper is: (i) to strengthen the claim that Old French had Stylistic Fronting as part of its grammar ; (ii) to argue that SFronted elements target a special topic position at the left field of the clause ; (iii) to put forward the hypothesis that in Old French (and in most Romance languages, Modern French being an exception) TP was a (strong) phase. A body of several Old French texts was carefully studied and the conclusion is that Stylistic Fronting was a very productive process indeed in that language (examples involving subject relative clauses are shown in (1), a context which is ideal for Stylistic Fronting, since a subject gap is always available).

The main pattern that emerges from my study of written texts in Old French and from other languages with Stylistic Fronting is that two elements can undergo the stylistic operation at the same time, but the two elements cannot both be XPs or both be heads. This pattern is exactly what has recently been found in Icelandic (Hrafnbjargarson 2004) and motivates a special category for SFronted elements. However, whereas Hrafnbjargarson (2004) argues for a Focus Phrase analysis (see also Fischer 2004 for Old Catalan), I propose that SFronted elements raise to a *Topic* position, albeit of a special kind. The SFronted constituent is a shifted defocalized element with the semantics of an asserted background topic: it cannot be contrastive or presupposed. I refer to this topic phrase as TopicP+ in order to differentiate it from TopicP which hosts topicalized elements raised in V2 contexts (a now customary description of V2 in the literature). SFronted heads move to Top+⁰ whereas SFronted XPs raise to the specifier of Spec-TopP+. That the CP layer contains more than one dedicated position for topics has recently been argued by Benincá and Poletto (2004). On this view, topics are not recursive as in Rizzi (1997), but belong to set positions.

It is further proposed that SF is not movement *to* (Holmberg 2000), but *through* Spec-TP. In order to reach Spec-Top+, an XP must pass through Spec-TP, which must in that case be empty. Spec-TP is available as an escape hatch, because as will be argued TP is a (strong) phrase in Old French (cyclic movement through Spec-TP is therefore required). The connection between the possibility of Stylistic Fronting and subject gaps is thus accounted for without the inconvenience of postulating movement of phonological matrices *into* Spec-TP as in Holmberg (2000). The proposal nevertheless relies on the idea as in Holmberg (2000) that the EPP can undergo feature fission between [D] (a categorial feature) and [P] (a feature requiring visibility, i.e. a specifier to be filled), with the added twist that: (i) the EPP need *not* undergo fission ; (ii) the features [D] and [P] may not necessarily come packaged as a bundle, [D] can appear on T⁰ while [P] can be on Top+ (this builds on work from Ritter 1992, 1993, 1995, Taraldsen 1994, Sigurðsson 1996, Béjar 2003 where ϕ -features do not come packaged as unorganised bundles). The optionality of SF does not require any special mechanism to

circumvent it as in Holmberg's analysis (especially since, Stylistic Fronting and expletives are not in complementary distribution in Old French). Either the EPP is split with its features scattered on different heads: then, SF is possible; or the EPP is not split (the EPP is a simple [D] or [D] and [P] form a bundle): then, SF cannot be operative.

The proposed analysis shares features with Rizzi-style accounts of left-dislocated elements, since a Specifier and a head are projected for Topics+, but also with Chomsky-style accounts of left-dislocated tokens, since on my view Stylistic Fronting is not really optional. They are both required by an EPP feature. In the case of Stylistic Fronting, an EPP feature is added to the edge of TP (which is a phase in Old French): it is only after the EPP feature on T has been 'checked' that the SFronted element is capable of moving to a Rizzi-style specifier of a topic phrase. Indeed, recently Chomsky offers not only a new analysis of Object Shift, but also proposes a way to account for non-feature driven optional movements which often have semantic consequences, such as Topicalization, Scrambling, and Focus. On this view, there does not seem to be an uninterpretable feature on the moving DP and, (ii) there is no obvious head that serves as the trigger of such movement. Chomsky suggests that these movements are best handled by imbuing certain heads with optional uninterpretable EPP features. These features drive the movement and are added if it has an effect on the output that is not available in the input (Have An Effect on Output Condition). The actual interpretation, however, does not arise from the inherent properties of the moved XP, but rather from the *configuration* created by the movement being interpreted in one way or the other.

- (1) a. Cardonnereuls et pinçons / Qui mout_i __ content t_i jolièrement
 'Goldfinches and chaffinches that sing very beautifully' (LG 30)
- b. Mes il vint lués, et sa mesniee / Qui molt_i __ estoit t_i bien anresniee
 'But he was not long to get here, and his manners that were very good'
 (LCC 2557-2558)
- c. Li quex est ce, savoir le vuel, / Qui tant_i __ a t_i folie et orguel,
 'Which one of you is it, I want to know, who has so much folly and pride'
 (LCC 2593-2594)
- d. Il entrent el palais qui mult_i __ ere t_i riches et biax
 'They entered the palace which very was rich and beautiful'
 (*La Conquête* p. 12)

Selected references

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